

We can now understand why among many peoples of Thus the antiquity, as Plutarch tells us, the time of sowing was a ^{^f}" time of sorrow. The laying of the seed in the earth was the sower a burial of the divine element, and it was fitting that like a /nten^{^l}bie human burial it should be performed with gravity and the semblance, if not the reality, of sorrow. Yet they sorrowed not without hope, perhaps a sure and certain hope, that the seed which they thus committed with sighs and tears to the ground would yet rise from the dust and yield fruit a hundredfold to the reaper. " They that sow⁷ in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, ncr his sheaves with him."¹

§ 4. *Rites of Harvest*

The Egyptian harvest, as we have seen, falls not in Lamenta-autumn but in spring, in the months of March, April, and J^e^{ns} of May. To the husbandman the time of harvest, at least in a Egyptian good year, must necessarily be a season of joy : in bringing reapers, home his sheaves he is requited for his long and anxious labours. Yet if the old Egyptian farmer felt a secret joy at reaping and garnering the grain, it was essential that he should conceal the natural emotion under an air of profound dejection. For was he not severing the body of the corn-god with his sickle and trampling it to pieces under the hoofs of his cattle on the threshing-floor ? ² Accordingly we are told that it was an ancient custom of the Egyptian corn-reapers to beat their breasts and lament over the first sheaf cut, while at the same time they called upon Isis.³ The

invocation seems to have taken the form of a melancholy chant, to which the Greeks gave the name of Maneros. Similar plaintive strains were chanted by corn-reapers in

British Columbia," *Journal of the*² As to the Egyptian modes of *Anthropological Institute* ^ xxxv. (1905) reaping and threshing see Sir J. pp. 140 sq. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and* ¹ Psalm cxxvi. 5 sq. Firmicus *Customs of the* *Ancient Egyptians* Maternus asks the Egyptians (*De* (London, 1878), ii. 419 sqq) A. *errore prof an arum religionum* ^ ii. 7), Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches* *"Cur plangitis fringes terras et ere-Lebcn im Altertwn* ^ pp. 572 sqq. *scntia lugetis semina ?*" ³ Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2.